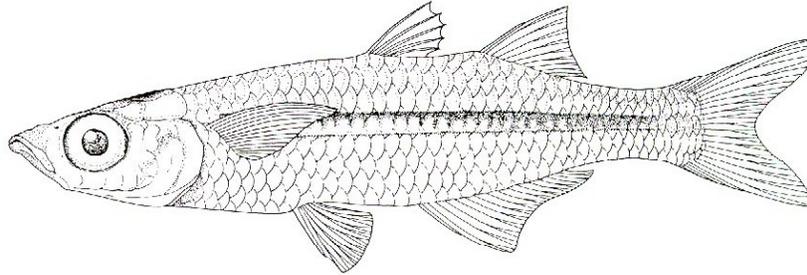


Common Name: **Key Silverside**



Scientific Name: *Menidia conchorum*

Area of Concern: Western Atlantic: Florida Keys

Year First Listed as a “Species of Concern”: 1991

Species Description:

This small fish lives in shallow, protected waters during the day, making it very difficult to observe. The key silverside is the smallest known species of *Menidia*. Its maximum size is 53 mm (about 2 inches). It is most easily distinguished from the other species in this genus by a lower anal ray count, fewer branchial lateral-line scales, and fewer total vertebrae. The silverside is a diurnal species occurring in swift moving schools. The fish is commonly found in shallow water among black mangrove rhizomes, where it is less vulnerable to predation. The key silverside usually moves into shallower water at night to presumably avoid predation. The key silverside is tolerant of a wide range of salinity, and aquatic vegetation is often found in their habitats. It is believed that the species spawns in the middle to late winter. Eggs are laid with long threads attaching it to a stalk. Diet items are mostly microscopic animals such as copepods, mysids, isopods, and most importantly, insects. It has been suggested that the key silverside may be a subspecies of the tidewater silverside (*M. peninsulae*).

Rationale for “Species of Concern” Listing:

Demographic and Diversity Concerns:

Key silverside is found in the Florida Keys, from Key West north to Long Key, FL. The apparent rarity of this species may be due in part to inaccessibility of the habitat to routine collecting.

Factors for decline:

The main threat to the key silverside is the loss of habitat due to the fish’s association with black mangrove. Historically, the species was found in a few localities in the keys: Key West, Big Pine, Cudjo, Rockland, Grassy and Long Keys.

Status Reviews/Research Completed or Underway:

*For further information on this Species of Concern, or on the Species of Concern Program in general, please contact Ms. Marta Nammack, NMFS, Office of Protected Resources, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, (301)713-1401, Marta.Nammack@noaa.gov ; or Jennifer Jacukiewicz, NMFS, Southeast Region, Protected Resources Division, 9721 Executive Center Drive, St. Petersburg, FL 33702, (727)570-5312, Jennifer.Jacukiewicz@noaa.gov.*

References:

Robins, C.R. and G.C. Ray, and J. Douglass. 1986. A field guide to Atlantic coast fishes of North America. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, U.S.A.

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